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DAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

SHORT STUDIES

VII.

MONOTHEISM

HEBREW AND CHRISTIAN

BY

R. B. GIRDLESTONE, M.A.

HON. CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH

FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF WYCLIFFE HALL, OXFORD

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

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EDITED BY

THE REV. A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, M.A., B.D.
VICAR OF GILDEN MORDEN



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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

THE object of the series of papers, of which this forms a part, is to place before Jews of Western training and education such aspects of Judaism and Christianity as seem to the authors to be of special importance, more particularly in their mutual relations, whether of affinity or of contrast.

The papers will be written confessedly from the Christian point of view, and by writers who have given special attention to the two religions. It is believed, however, that in every case the spirit in which they are written will be that of the proverb: *Amicus Plato sed magis amica Veritas.*¹

¹ Adapted, as it seems, from Aristotle, *Ethics*, I. vi. 1.

The writers are of opinion that for many reasons there is both room and need for such discussions, and they trust that this opinion is shared by a larger public, both Christian and Jewish.

The part of the editor is simple, *viz.*, to see that each paper as a whole carries out the intention of the series. With this restriction each writer will be left absolutely free, and will alone bear all responsibility.

A. LUKYN WILLIAMS.

GULDEN MORDEN VICARAGE,
1st Nov., 1906.

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MONOTHEISM HEBREW AND CHRISTIAN

§ 1. GROUND-PLAN OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES.

FOR the purpose of the present discussion the Hebrew Scriptures are taken as they stand in the ordinary editions, and no question is raised as to their date or compilation. They are regarded as witnesses to the beliefs of the Hebrew nation on a subject of supreme importance, and their authority, as compared with later traditions, however valuable, is accepted as final. Moreover, they are taken as a whole in the belief that they are inspired by one Spirit, and that there must be harmony in their teaching.

The Sacred Books grew up gradually through many ages. They are mainly practical and instructive; their theology is entwined with their history; and there is a forward tendency throughout, as if a Divine plan were being slowly unfolded. What was this plan? The *Magna Charta* of the Hebrew race was

granted to Abraham some 4,000 years ago, and one of its three clauses was world-wide in its compass, for it conveyed a promise that the human race should be blessed through his seed (Gen. xii. 3; xviii. 18; xxviii. 14). A thousand years after this grant was bestowed the era of the Hebrew monarchy began, and in its track there sprang up a galaxy of prophetic writers, Isaiah and the rest. On studying their writings we find that the promise made to the patriarchs had not been forgotten, but it assumed a new form. A kingdom greater than that of David and Solomon loomed in the distance. Jerusalem was to become the headquarters of a spiritual community. There was to be a Gentile or international graft on a Jewish or national stock. Amidst the ups and downs, the sins and sorrows of the sacred people there runs a world-wide idea and hope; it is not human but Divine. The everlasting God, who remembered Noah in the days of the Flood, and Abraham in the crisis of Lot's trouble, and Israel in the time of their bondage, has never forgotten the needs of the human race. The seed of the woman was assuredly destined to bruise the serpent's head and to undo the mischief under which the whole creation was groaning and travailing.

§ 2. TEACHING OF THE SACRED RECORDS CONCERNING THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS.

The God of the Hebrews is the Creator of heaven and earth, the Author of the universe, ruling and overruling all His creatures everywhere, present through all space, knowing the secrets of all hearts, loving what our conscience tells us we ought to love, hating what our conscience tells us we ought to hate, existing before the mountains were brought forth, and continuing the same in nature and character even though the material universe were to roll away. It is evident that neither space nor time are to Him what they are to us—though they are something. Whereas for the purposes of revelation God is described under human analogies, yet there are plenty of correctives in the Sacred Text which keep us from regarding Him simply as a magnified but invisible human being. His arm is not an arm of flesh. He seeth not as man seeth. His thoughts are not as our thoughts. His personality can hardly be identical in nature with ours. He is one, but not an eternal isolation, for there is no unity in all respects like His. We cannot have too high an idea of the Divine

Being. With all our searching we cannot find Him out to perfection. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He inhabits eternity. And yet, forasmuch as our spirit is akin to His, He is said to be nigh them that seek Him and to dwell with the lowly and contrite heart.

The world would be poor indeed had it not the legacy of the Hebrew Scriptures. They stand for pure Monotheism, in other words for the unity and spirituality of God. This is their foundation truth. The value of this testimony would be enhanced were we to compare the Hebrew faith with what we know of the old Chaldean, Egyptian and Canaanite religions. Modern discoveries have taught us the reason for the law against intermarriage with the heathen. Polytheism, materialism and immorality, which were the marks of heathenism, were to be avoided at all costs.

The Hebrew history has been compared to a Divine barometer. The rise and fall of Monotheism is known by the rise and fall of the Hebrew nation whose interests were bound up in its loyal recognition of the one living and true God.

§ 3. HEBREW MONOTHEISM THE BASIS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

All true Christians cordially accept the Monotheism of the Hebrew Scriptures, and they do so because their Lord and Master did so. When He was asked what was the chief commandment in the law He replied by quoting the watchword of the Hebrew nation, "Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD". We Christians take this as the foundation of our faith. We are not idolaters, we are not polytheists, nor are we Unitarians; we are monotheists in the sense in which the Hebrew Scriptures are monotheistic; not in the sense in which the Mohammedans are monotheistic.

Is there then a distinction between Unitarianism and Monotheism? There is. But if God is one, can there be more than one "Person" in the Godhead? That is exactly the point which we are about to examine in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures, and by a careful study of their testimony.

Much is left obscure in these ancient writings, and for wise reasons. The battle of Monotheism was hard and long, as Israel learnt to their cost. It would have been harder still were it not that God reserved

some elements in the revelation concerning Himself until the nation was so purged from idolatry that it could receive them. After all, flesh and blood cannot take in the whole truth about God. The conditions of His nature are very different from ours. Language is constructed for human affairs and can only imperfectly express the things of God. We have only to examine the word "Person" in Hebrew, in Greek and in English, to realise this. Moreover, our minds are stunted, and prejudices, national and religious, in which we have been brought up, exercise a potent—sometimes a blinding and warping influence over us. We have to pray again and again, "What I see not teach Thou me".

§ 4. THE NAMES OF GOD IN THE HEBREW BIBLE.¹

The first verse of the Bible reminds us that the most general name of God (*Elohim*) is plural in form, but is capable of governing a singular verb. Why should this be so? And if it is thought becoming that the true God should be thus revealed why should

¹ The subject of this section is fully discussed in the writer's *Old Testament Synonyms*, chap. ii., 2nd ed., Nisbet.

not the other names by which He is described be similarly plural in form? Why, for example, should *Elohim* stand for the true God 2,310 times, and *Elim* not once? The same may be said of the name JEHOVAH, the LORD, which is never used in the plural at all and which is peculiar in its form, being incapable of receiving a definite article or a suffix, yet it stands for Him of whom we read, "The LORD is *Elohim* in heaven above and upon the earth beneath" (Deut. iv. 39).

The fact that God's representative may be called *Elohim* is remarkable. Thus we read (Ex. vii. 1), "I have appointed thee *Elohim* to Pharaoh". The word is used in Exodus of the Judges, who stood for Divine justice, and this usage is referred to in 1 Samuel xxviii., and again in Psalm lxxxii. But we feel that it would be wholly inappropriate to use the name JEHOVAH for this purpose because it is personal rather than attributive.

Although the plural form *Elohim* is so often used we must not forget that the singular form *Eloah* is found fifty-nine times, chiefly in the Book of Job, and almost always in reference to the true God. Of the eighty-four passages where the Aramaic *Elah* occurs, seventy-two refer to the true God. The shortened

and probably original form *El* is frequently used in connection with some special attributes of God.

Whilst these words mark God's almighty power, *Adonai* (Lord) denotes His ownership and lordship. The name JEHOVAH (LORD) seems the most personal and yet the most unattainable of all. It sets forth the faithfulness of the Eternal God to His gracious promises, and marks Him as the Same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

As we meditate on these glorious names and note their usage we thank God for revealing Himself so fully to the Hebrew nation; and yet we become increasingly conscious that we are but children, and we often repeat the ancient question, "What is His name and what is His Son's name, if thou canst tell?" (Prov. xxx. 4).

§ 5. DIVINE INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN.

The central thought brought to light in Biblical history and prophecy is this, that God is personally interested in the affairs of men, and that He intervenes in His own time in order to secure certain results. Intervention is not always obtrusive, but it may be detected even in such a book as Esther in

which God is not so much as named. It comes to the front in the day of Moses, in his birth, upbringing and subsequent history ; but long before the days of Moses intervention and what we usually call providential government had been at work. The world was getting old before Abraham came on the scene. In course of time he was told of the coming bondage of his seed, and of their subsequent deliverance which was to be wrought by God. Every step in this deliverance is described in the Book of Exodus. Moses is in the foreground, but God is in the background. When Moses lifts up his rod it is God that really acts. The rod was the sign of God's presence, but had no force in itself. No one could do the things which are described in this book but God Himself, who is the Author of Nature and who has all forces under His control. The salvation of the seed of Abraham was in one sense effected by the hand of Moses ; but it is the LORD that saved Israel (Exod. xiv. 30) ; it is the LORD that became their salvation (Exod. xv. 2).

If we turn to Psalm cvi. we find the story retold in a poetic form, and along with it, entwined with it, we have the sad story of Israel's sin : " We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed

iniquity, we have done wickedly". All the way through it had been the same—human sin and Divine salvation, human unbelief and Divine faithfulness. Evidently it is sin from which Israel needs to be saved; and what is true of the sample nation is true of all the world. Intervention is needed for the whole human race. Has there been such intervention? If so, by whose agency has it been wrought? Has some one like Moses ever been raised up to save his people from their sins and to deliver the world from its burdens? We must look further before we can answer. At any rate we may be certain of one thing: it is a pleasure to God to save the lost. He is prepared to forgive iniquity, transgression and sin, though He will by no means clear (the guilty). That is to say, He cannot ignore sin even though He is ready to pardon it (Exod. xxxiv. 7).

§ 6. SELF-MANIFESTATION IN CONNECTION WITH INTERVENTION IN THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

On looking further at the story of the Exodus, together with that of the forty years' sojourn and of the entrance into Canaan, we find another element of truth brought out. It is that while God carries out His purposes through Moses and Aaron, He also

has other and special ways of manifesting Himself. The unity of the Godhead has to be read in the light of this self-revelation. God was to be known both by what He said and by what He did. Before examining the passages in question we must turn back to Genesis, which is substantially, if not in actual form, a pre-Mosaic record, and we must study its wording carefully and prayerfully.

The first chapter is highly suggestive. Not only is there the grammatical phenomenon contained in the first verse, but there is the utterance concerning the nature and purpose of man as a representative being in whom God plants certain characteristic faculties, and to whom He delegates dominion over earth. The passage raises many questions. Especially we find ourselves asking how far and in what respects are the nature and personality of man exact transcripts and counterparts of the nature and personality of God. Settle this, and you have settled everything.

One difficulty in finding a reply lies in the third chapter, which sketches the story of the sin of our first parents and of its punishment. The human race was allowed to run on, but from that time forward it was not what God originally intended it to be. Ages

afterwards we are told that God repented that He had made man upon the earth; yet a remnant was left, and from that remnant Abraham was chosen as a centre of Divine purpose. The story of his seed occupies the rest of the Bible.

Pursuing our inquiry, we find intercourse between God and Cain, between God and Enoch, and between God and Noah. It is of the nature of speech; but there may have been vision as well.

In reference to the Tower of Babel, speech is described as associated with movement. "The Lord came down to see the city." In Abraham's time it is associated with sight. "The LORD appeared to him" (xii. 7). But under what form? Again (in xv. 1) we read, "The Word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision". Some Being was seen as well as heard. At least the sensation which Abram's spirit experienced could be best expressed in this way. Moreover, it is said of the LORD that He brought Abram forth out of the tent, as if leading him by the hand. In the sixteenth chapter the Angel or Agent of the LORD is referred to for the first time. He finds Hagar and speaks to her, saying, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly". We notice that the Hebrew personal pronoun is emphatic

here. Hagar evidently thought that it was the LORD Himself who spoke to her, and she called Him "Thou God seest me". In this narrative we find three names for God, *El*, *Elohim*, the LORD (Jehovah), and with them is entwined the title of the Angel or Agent of the LORD. He is manifestly and confessedly the audible and visible representative of the Most High, and Hagar felt that in seeing Him she saw God. Here, then, the idea of Divine intervention evidently includes self-manifestation. It is as if the angel or agent were an embodiment of the unseen God. The seventeenth chapter is of the same character. The Lord appears, speaks, leaves off, ascends. Again He is described as *El*, *Elohim* and the LORD. The title *Shaddai* given to Him marks not so much His omnipotence as His all-sufficiency. The Being who thus appears must be the same as the Angel of the LORD in the previous chapter. He now acts as the Angel of the Covenant.

In the eighteenth chapter three Beings are suddenly seen standing by Abraham's tent. One proves to be the LORD, the Judge of all the earth. He comes, speaks, goes. The other two are angels or agents, and they thus describe their mission in the next chapter: "The Lord hath sent us to destroy the

city". What they do is done in the LORD'S name and by His power and order. Compare the mission of Gabriel in Daniel viii. 16 and ix. 21.

In the twentieth chapter *Elohim* speaks to Abimelech in a dream. There are no signs of a vision in the strict sense, and the name of the LORD is not introduced except in a note at the end of the narrative. In the twenty-first, the LORD God fulfils His promise to Abraham, and the Angel of God, speaking sometimes *for* God and sometimes *as* God, delivers Ishmael from death. Abraham's new experience teaches him to call on the name of the LORD as the everlasting God (*El*), and prepares him for the remarkable incident narrated in the twenty-second chapter. Here God tests Abraham's faith, and the Angel of the LORD speaks to him from heaven, makes provision in the mount, and conveys the renewed promise, confirming it with an oath.

Passing on to chap. xxviii. we have Jacob's dream. There is the ladder; there are God's angels going up and down; there is the LORD standing above, audible and visible. The names *El*, *Elohim* and the LORD are used in the narrative. Intervention and self-manifestation come out as before.

A more striking revelation was granted to Jacob.

on his return to Canaan twenty years later. A Being¹ wrestles with him (chap. xxxii.). He must have had flesh and bones. At any rate there was something which produced the clear conviction that He was actually wrestling. Who was He? He stood as the manifestation of God in the flesh. His name is "Wonderful". Jacob's own conclusion is clear: "I have seen God face to face". The names *Elohim* and *El* are used. Jacob had been earnestly pleading with God as the LORD; and here is the LORD'S intervention guaranteed.

In chap. xxxv. *El Shaddai* is seen by Jacob, speaks to him, goes up from him; and in chap. xlvi. another vision of the night is granted, and God promises to go down with him into Egypt and to bring him up again. Jacob subsequently speaks of him as the angel which redeemed him from all evil (xlviii. 16), and calls down his blessing on Joseph's sons.

These are the most notable theological phenomena in Genesis, and Hebrew Monotheism has to take them into account. They show that the Sent is one with the Sender—substantially one, though apparently not personally one—capable of being seen as well as

¹ It is important to notice the distinctions between the Hebrew words translated "man" in this class of passage. See *Old Testament Synonyms*, chap. iii.

heard, adopting human form but not (so far) human nature, the Agent of the LORD though not called the Son of God, coming down, going up, touching, grasping and being grasped as in the act of wrestling.

§ 7. SELF-MANIFESTATION IN EXODUS AND THE LATER BOOKS.

We now return to the promised intervention in behalf of the seed of Abraham when they were in Egypt. In Exodus iii. 6 the Angel or Agent of the LORD appeals both to the eye and to the ear of Moses. All that Moses actually saw was the flash of fire issuing from the bush, for he hid his face from the actual vision of God. A new stage of intervention is thus ushered in by a new self-manifestation. The angel is described as God and the LORD, and is identified with the Being who appeared to the patriarchs. He reiterates the promises and the actual words used in previous revelations and proclaims Himself as "I AM THAT I AM". Hitherto the meaning of the name Jehovah had not been fully grasped but new events would give it new significance,¹ and it

¹ The name itself seems to have been known in Chaldea in ancient times; but the historical unrolling of the Divine purpose invested it with special dignity and made it a living true reality from Moses' time onward.

would represent the eternal and absolute covenant-keeping God of Israel.

In chap. xix. the LORD descends again. He does not appear in a fiery bush but in a thick cloud amidst earthquakes, smoke and flames. The giving of the law is supplemented by a promise, "Behold I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way. . . . Obey His voice, provoke Him not, for He will not pardon your transgressions, for My Name is in Him. But if thou shalt indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies" (Ex. xxiii. 20-22). Who is this Angel? Is he the Being of Gen. xxiv. 7 or of Mal. iii. 1? He is referred to again in chap. xxxii. 34, "Behold mine Angel shall go before thee". In chap. xxxiii. 2 there is apparently a contrast between the Angel sent before Israel and the presence of the LORD in the midst of the people; but this contrast is withdrawn in the 14th verse where we read, "My presence shall go (with thee) and I will cause thee to rest". Compare Isaiah lxiii. 9, "The Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old". He is evidently a personal representative of the unseen God; one with Him and yet distinct.

These passages stand together, and in their light we have to read Exodus xxiv. 10, 11, "They saw the God of Israel . . . they saw God".¹ The elders ate and drank in his presence, and he laid no hand upon them to slay them. They could describe the sapphire pavement which was beneath his feet, but they dare tell no more. We are instinctively led on to the vision of Ezekiel described in his first chapter (verse 26), "There was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and on the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a MAN (אֱדָם) above upon it. And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD." The Divine Being is here presented in the aspect of a glorified human being. As we contemplate this grand vision we get

¹Note the two Hebrew words translated "saw"; one refers to eye sight, the other to visionary sight.

new light on the original order that man should be made in the image of God. Human nature was evidently designed in such a way that it might worthily express and represent its unseen and immaterial Creator. Compare with these passages the words spoken of Moses (Num. xii. 8), "With him will I speak mouth to mouth, visibly and not enigmatically, and the likeness (A.V. form) of the LORD shall he behold".¹ This is the "likeness" which every godly man hopes to behold in the great awakening (Ps. xvii. 15).

The books which follow the law contain further samples of self-revelation in connection with intervention. First, there is the notable passage in Joshua v. where a man, or rather a Being, is presented before the eye of Joshua. He stands sword in hand as captain of the host of the LORD, and consequently the very ground on which Joshua stands is regarded as holy (compare Ex. iii. 5). He speaks as the

¹The word תמונה is rare. No likeness of any creature was to be made for purposes of worship (Ex. xx. 4 ; Deut. iv. 16, 23, 25 ; v. 8). The great mass of the congregation saw no likeness at the giving of the law (Deut. v. 12), they only heard a voice. A likeness appeals to the eye, and must have form and substance. Compare Job iv. 16, "A spirit stood. . . . I did not recognise its appearance ; a likeness was before mine eyes. . . . I heard a voice."

LORD, the Sender and the Sent being practically identical, the one Person seen worthily representing another unseen Being.

Again, in Judges ii. the Angel of the Lord comes up as if from the Jordan Valley and speaks as if He were the LORD Himself. So it is in Judges vi. 11 and 22, where the Angel of the LORD appears to Gideon, looks upon him, speaks to him and says, "Have not I sent thee?" and repeats the time-honoured words uttered to the patriarchs, "Certainly I will be with thee". Gideon is terrified, as others had been before him, at seeing the Angel of the LORD face to face, but he is encouraged by the words, "Peace be to thee, fear not, thou shalt not die". Another time the Angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife (Jud. xiii.). She describes his aspect as that of a man, or rather Being, of God (*i.e.*, a Divine Being). He is called both the Angel of God and the Angel of the LORD. He evidently had a human form, but his name is "Wonderful" (compare Gen. xxxii. 29). He certainly did wondrously for he ascended in the flame from the altar. Upon this, Manoah said, "We shall certainly die because we have seen God". He was right in his fact but mistaken in his fear.

Once more, when a revelation was made to

Samuel (1 Sam. iii.) the LORD came, and stood, and called; and we read that the LORD appeared and revealed himself to Samuel by the Word of the LORD.

These passages are of course perfectly familiar to Jewish commentators, who recognise that again and again the invisible God presented Himself to the eye of man under human form and aspect when about to intervene in the affairs of His people, and that "the messenger is called by the name of Him who sends him". But they hardly realise the importance of this fact in its bearing on the nature of true Hebrew Monotheism. The passages now enumerated cannot be dismissed offhand. There is method in them, and there is teaching in them. They are historical narratives of Divine self-manifestations in connection with interventions running through hundreds of years.

§ 8. SELF-MANIFESTATION IN THE MESSIAH.

After the kingly period had set in there was a change in the Divine method. The prophetic element was developed, especially in the age of Hezekiah, and the Messianic doctrine began to come to the front,

We are not now, however, concerned with this except so far as it bears on Hebrew Monotheism.

In 2 Samuel vii. we are told that the Word of the LORD came to Nathan. This was the form of Divine self-revelation in these days ; and Nathan in speaking to David uses the formula, " Thus saith the LORD of Hosts ". The promise here given to David concerns his seed : " I will set up thy seed after thee ; and I will establish his kingdom for ever. He shall build a house for My name. I will be his Father and he shall be My son." David's natural impulse was to regard this utterance as the promise of a permanent dynasty and to associate it with his own son who should build the Temple. His acceptance of the Divine promise is expressed in striking words ; and the whole narrative is forcibly appealed to in Psalm lxxxix. The promise is evidently far-reaching. It colours the rest of the history, the prophets and the Psalms. Moreover it is associated with the promises made to Abraham (Micah vii. 18-20).

Have we any reason to connect this passage with the series of interventions by self-revelation which we have traced from patriarchal days, and which perhaps may be detected at an earlier stage? In other words, was God about to manifest Himself as

King and as Temple-builder, in the person of a son of David, who should also be in a special sense Son of God? This question is one of vital importance.

It is evident that the Messiah was to be human; but was He in any sense to be superhuman? Was He a representative of God, related to Him as the Sent was to the Sender in the many passages which we have been considering.

A brief examination of some well-known Messianic passages, accepted as such by Jewish doctors,¹ will throw light on these questions.

(i.) Why should it be specified that the Messiah should not only be born at Bethlehem (not at Jerusalem), but also of a virgin, *i.e.*, of a marriageable maiden? Was He to be the "seed of the woman" in a special sense? And why called Immanuel? Was God going to be with His people in some new way?

(ii.) Why called "Wonderful Counsellor," "The Mighty God," "The Father of Eternity" (*i.e.*, the source of eternal life), "The Prince of Peace"? These titles would not be suitable for Hezekiah, Josiah or Zerubbabel. Compare Isaiah, chaps. ix., xi., xii.

¹ See Dr. Edersheim's "List of passages Messianically applied in Rabbinic writings," appended to the second volume of his *Life and Times of Jesus, The Messiah*,

(iii.) Why should His coming be identified in such a marked manner with the coming of the LORD? See Isaiah xxxii. ; xxxv. ; xl. 6 ; Zechariah ii. 10 ; xii. 7 ; xiv. 5 ; Malachi iii. 1.

(iv.) In what sense were His goings forth to be from of old, from everlasting ?

(v.) Why should He come, as if from a previous state of existence, to do God's will, substituting His mission for the four classes of offering with which Israel was familiar ? (Ps. xl.).

(vi.) Why should He be called not only the Son of David but in a marked way the Son of God ? (Ps. ii.), even God's firstborn ? (Ps. lxxxix. 27). The title cannot be taken here in a national sense, as in Exodus iv. 22.

(vii.) On what grounds should all nations call Him blessed ? (Ps. lxxii. 17). (Compare Isa. lvi. and lxi.)

(viii.) How is it that the Psalmist is bold enough to call the promised King not only fair to look upon and gracious in speech but also GOD, possessed of an eternal throne and of a righteous disposition, and consequently anointed by God—His God—above His fellows ? (Ps. xlv. 6, 7).

(ix.) How are we to account for the 110th Psalm where David speaks of the Messiah as his Lord and

Master, as one set by God at His own right hand, and as constituted a priest for ever after the order of the king-priest Melchizedek? (See Zech. vi., where the Branch is also described as a priest.)

(x.) Observe again the moral and spiritual characteristics of the Messiah in such chapters as Isaiah xi., xvi. and xxxii. In chapter xlii. 1 He is described as the Servant of the Lord, an ancient title given to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and to Israel as a people (Is. xli. 8, 9). None of these deserve the title in such a sense as He does who lives the life of God and exhibits to the full the self-sacrificing love of God.

§ 9. MESSIANIC PROPHECY IN THE LIGHT OF HEBREW MONOTHEISM.

After surveying the passages of Scripture which are generally accounted as "Messianic," such as those just referred to, no thoughtful student can fail to look forward to a special manifestation of Divine glory in the person of one of David's seed, who should be a Shepherd, Restorer and Purifier of Israel, and who should exercise a vast and blessed influence over all nations, bringing them near not to Israel only but to the God of Israel. The promises thus

indicated might be delayed either through the sin of Israel or for some other cause, but they would never be forgotten. They are (to use a strong figure) graven on the palms of God's hands.

Again and again the question rises, could any merely human being, such as Moses, carry out the whole of the Divine purpose? or must He be a Manifestation in the sense in which the Angel of the LORD was a Manifestation? Bearing in mind that the intervention to which all the prophets testify is infinitely wider in its range and more extended in its bearing on human destiny than the exodus of Israel from Egypt, or the return from Babylon, can we fail to ascribe its execution to any other than the Lord Himself? Should we not indeed naturally look for some further and more wonderful manifestation than what had already been granted? In order to bring the matter to a point let us suppose that a being who was subject to conditions of humanity should claim to be in a special sense sent by God and the offspring of God; supposing also that there were some *primâ facie* reasons for accepting this claim, ought it not to be formally considered in the light of true Hebrew Monotheism and in the light of Messianic prophecy? For example, would

the special relationship between the Sender and the Sent, the source and the stream, be fully considered in such an inquiry? If the case has actually arisen and the claimant has been condemned without such due and full investigation as seems to be demanded, then the question may be raised whether the Jewish people in their zeal against idolatry and polytheism have lost the true doctrine of God as it is set forth in their own Scriptures.

§ 10. WHO BUT THE SON OF GOD CAN CARRY OUT THE PROGRAMME?

It must be granted that the ideas of Divine Fatherhood and Sonship are anthropomorphic, and are to be taken with limitations. So is the idea of Personality when applied to the LORD and to the Angel of the LORD, who are regarded as one and yet in some sense distinct. The same is the case with the idea of speech as a medium between the Divine mind and the act of creation. But it is a help to thought, and we receive it on authority. "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made. . . ." "He spake and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast." No Hebrew theologian would offer serious objection to such a formula as this: "In the beginning was Divine

speech, all things came into being through Divine speech, the thought of God as Creator cannot be severed from the speech which is the eternal offspring of Deity". But can the living and true God be manifested and expressed in One who shall not only share the *form* of man but also assume human *nature*, taking the manhood into the Godhead ?

The Monotheism of the Old Testament does not shut the door to such a possibility. The Messianic passages in some cases seem to demand it. If there were such a Being, He would be "God of the substance of the Father begotten before the world, and man of the substance of His mother born in the world". Such an One could fulfil all the promises of God to the human race. God would be glorified in Him. He could receive worship as the Captain of the Lord's Host received worship ; and though in coming to do His Father's will He might have to humble Himself and drink a bitter cup, yet even in doing this He might exhibit the most glorious attributes of the living God. For God could say of Him what He said of the angel who led Israel through the wilderness, "My Name is in Him". He would be, not the rival of the Father, but His Representative, the expression of His mind, and the

agent of His purpose. And of His kingdom over Israel and over the nations there would be no end.

Taking a large view of the prophetic element in the Hebrew Scripture, we have an outline of the gracious purposes of God towards the children of men containing the following elements :—

(i.) *The promised seed of the woman* who should crush the head of the mischief-maker. Every student gathers from the Bible that the wages of sin is death, and that the root of sin is heart alienation from the blessed God, and that this heart alienation is inherited from our first parents and was originally due to the temptation of the Evil One. Consequently “the seed of the woman” must deal with Satan, with the heart of man, and with death.

(ii.) *The promised blessing for all nations* in the seed of Abraham. This blessing must signify a manifestation of the Divine favour bringing joy to the human heart. Some special act or course of action on the part of the Divine Being must be its cause, even though it be wrought by human instrumentality. It must show in a decisive manner that God loves not Israel only but the world.

(iii.) *The promised prophet* whom God would raise up to Israel from among them. He would be a

law-giver and teacher, not like the ordinary prophets but like unto Moses, with whom alone God spoke face to face (Deut. xxxiv. 10). The moral law, so far as its root principles are concerned, is immutable, but the covenant (Ex. xxiv.) which was made through Moses has been broken by Israel; and provision is made in the Scripture for a new covenant exhibiting God's mercy in a new and striking way and affecting the heart as the old covenant failed to do (Jer. xxxi.).

(iv.) *The promised sacrifice.*—The old sacrificial system was to pass away. The four leading classes of offering were to vanish at the appearance of Him who says, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Ps. xl. ; Is. liii.).

(v.) *The promised Priest* was to come who should be not after the order of Aaron but after the order of Melchizedek. He was to be a Priest for ever, occupying an infinitely higher position than that of any Aaronic or Maccabean priest-king.

(vi.) *The promised way of pardon* is introduced in Scripture in connection with the new covenant. The Mosaic covenant made no direct provision for pardon except in a shadowy way on the day of atonement. But was it really needed? and if so

how was it to be obtained from the God of pardons? Was it by confession? by penitence? by conversion? was it to be the reward of merit? Can we work out our failure in the past by resolutions and strivings to be better in the future? Could the slaughter of victims or the offering of ourselves do away with sin? or is there some other way which God had in store, whereby He could blot out sin and give place to the sinner? Jeremiah xxxi. points hopefully to the answer.

(vii.) *The promised King over all nations.*—In old days a king was not only a Judge but a Saviour. He was to fight his people's battles, and so win his people's loyalty. This was the position of King David at his best. But the Messiah is to rule over all nations, assuming by Divine order the functions belonging to God alone. The expression "all nations" is sometimes taken in a limited sense, but there are several passages which hardly admit of any restrictions. See Gen. xviii. 18; xxii. 18; also Ps. lxxii. 11, 17, where the dominion of the Messiah is coupled with the Abrahamic blessing. The world-wide Messianic rule is set forth also in Ps. ii. 8; Is. ii. 2-4; xi. 10; xlii. 1-4, and Zec. ix. 9, 10 (which is based on Ps. lxxii. 11, 17). The kingdoms of the

world are to become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ. What a responsible task is thus to be undertaken by the Son of God!

These seven great manifestations of Divine grace are nearly related; in fact they are largely intertwined in prophecy. If One Person were to carry out the programme thus indicated, by what power would He accomplish it? The more we contemplate the matter the more clearly we see that the Coming One had no ordinary undertaking before Him. It is spiritual, permanent and world-wide. It needs more than a strong right arm, more than even the combined effort of legions of angels. It is not such a work as Napoleon Bonaparte or Mohammed attempted. It is not proselytism or despotism, but far-reaching spiritual and personal influence which is needed, so that the hearts and thoughts of men of all nations may be liberated from the thralldom of evil and brought into captivity to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

§ II. CHRISTIAN MONOTHEISM AND THE CLAIMS OF THE LORD JESUS.

We have been putting along side of one another the narratives concerning Divine intervention in the past,

and the promises concerning Divine intervention in the future. These narratives and promises must be taken as a revelation of the ways of God. Hebrew Monotheism has to make room for the Word, the Captain, the Angel of the LORD. God has not given His glory to another, but has manifested His glory in a Being who is one with Him and yet subservient to Him and dependent on Him, as the sun's rays are on the sun.

If there were no Christians, no New Testament, no Jesus, this would remain true, and it would be a dividing-line between true Hebrew faith on the one hand, and Mohammedanism and Unitarianism on the other.

But now turn to the historic pages of the New Testament. Scrutinise the text in order to find out what were the claims of Jesus. How did He seek to establish them? How was the Sent related to the Sender? Were the Divine attributes embodied in Him and exhibited by Him? Do the prophetic lines which have been enumerated above converge in Him? Does He appeal to the heart and conscience of the world? Are men of all nations blessed in Him? Has He proved to be a prophet like Moses? a priest like Melchizedek? a king greater than Solomon? What is the nature and source of His king-

ship? Is it due to the way in which He lived? or to the way in which He died? or to what followed? Is it through faith in His self-sacrifice that men live new lives, dying to sin, and living to righteousness and unselfishness? Is His Spirit a present inspiration to all who call upon Him? Does He draw men of all nations in true repentance and loyalty to the Lord God of Israel? These are the great questions at issue between Jews and Christians, or rather between the Lord Jesus and the whole world. They are urgent. Other things may well be laid aside until they have had full consideration.

We Christians believe that the Word, the Angel of the LORD, has come down, not only in the form of man, but in the nature of man, having taken the manhood into the Godhead. The Books of the New Testament are saturated with this grand doctrine. We therefore regard Him as both Son of God by original nature, and Son of man by assumed nature, as well as Son of David by office. The Hebrew Scriptures do not fully teach this truth, but they lead up to it. In fact, it is the crown of Revelation.

The Fatherhood and Sonship thus indicated are far beyond our conception, but we gladly abide by the

teaching and the very wording of the Books which we hold sacred. From the venerable pages of Genesis and Exodus we have been taught the truth that the unity of God does not mean isolation, and that within its mysterious compass there is the secret and eternal source and the glorious co-eternal stream ; and the Prophets and Psalms have led us further in the Christian direction. The taking in of this truth is itself of the nature of a personal revelation made to the open, willing heart by the inspiration of the Spirit of truth.

It needs but a step further to feel assured that the Lord Jesus is He of whom Moses and the prophets spoke, and that in Him we all, whether Jew or Gentile, have pardon, restoration and the spring of eternal life. He is a gift to the individual believer, a gift to the world at large, and a gift in a special sense—yet to be fully revealed—to Israel.

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